

August 9, 2007

Public Notice for Water Quality Certification and/or Waste Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects)

Humboldt County DPW – Steelhead Road Embankment Repair
WDID No. 1B07055WNHU

Humboldt County

On May 4, 2007, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from the Humboldt County Department of Public Works (applicant), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, section 401, Water Quality Certification for activities related to a storm damage repair project that involves repairing a failed embankment on Steelhead Road at Post Mile 0.20 near Alderpoint. The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States associated with an unnamed tributary to the Eel River in the Spy Rock Hydrologic Subarea No. 111.42.

Steelhead Road is a rural gravel road that runs along an unnamed intermittent stream that flows directly into the Eel River. Severe storm events in December 2005 and January 2006 caused a small section of the road shoulder and embankment to fail and slide into the stream channel. The embankment failure area is approximately 20 feet wide measured parallel to the road, 20 feet high measured from the edge of the roadway to the toe of the embankment failure, and 5 feet thick. The proposed project involves excavation of a 20-foot long toe trench near the base of the embankment failure followed by placement of approximately 74 cubic yards of 1-ton to 2-ton rock slope protection (RSP) in the toe trench and up the embankment to the road shoulder. Equipment used for placing the RSP will be operated from the road surface. The proposed project will result in 60 square feet (0.001 acre) and 20 linear feet of permanent impacts to the streambank. Compensatory mitigation is not required for the proposed project. Noncompensatory mitigation for this project includes the use of Best Management Practices for sediment and turbidity control and the use of heavy equipment near a waterway. The proposed project is scheduled for the summer 2007 when the stream is dry or the flows are very low. Construction activities are expected to take one day to complete.

The applicant has applied for authorization from the United States Army Corps of Engineers to perform the project under Nationwide Permit Number 3, pursuant to Clean Water Act, section 404. The Humboldt County Department of Public Works has determined that this project is statutorily exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review (section 15301 – existing facilities and section 15304 – minor alterations to land). Based on a review of the project information submitted to date, Regional Water Board staff have determined that this project is categorically exempt from CEQA review (Class 1, Section 15301 – existing facilities) and anticipate filing a Notice of Exemption for this project.

Regional Water Board staff are proposing to regulate this project pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (33 USC 1341) and/or Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control

Act authority. In addition, staff will consider all comments submitted in writing and received at this office by mail during a 21-day comment period that begins on the first date of issuance of this letter and ends at 5:00 p.m. on the last day of the comment period. If you have any questions, please contact staff member Dean Prat at (707) 576-2801 within 21 days of the posting of this notice.

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